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ABSTRACT

The manual is intended for training personnel who provide transportation services to handicapped students. Sections cover: types of special education transportation, state regulations (Illinois) governing special education transportation, major concerns of transportation providers, brief descriptions of the various areas of exceptionality (e.g. behavior disordered, early childhood, hearing impaired, learning disabled, mentally handicapped, physically handicapped, visually impaired), responsibilities of special education transportation personnel (including the transportation coordinator, the driver, and the transportation aide), special medical considerations and procedures for the transportation of handicapped students (such as management of students experiencing epileptic seizures), emergency suggestions and procedures for the transportation of handicapped children, suggested procedures for drivers when parents or guardians are not at home, and positioning and management of severely handicapped students. Appended are a sample letter to the parent or guardian, a sample policy statement for safety and discipline procedures regarding student transportation, sample rules of conduct, a daily transportation checklist, a sample disciplinary letter to parents, communication suggestions with special education students, and suggestions for student training. (DB)

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WHEELS OF PROGRESS

Inservice Manual for Special Transportation Personnel

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Wheels of Progress

Inservice Manual
for Special Transportation Personnel

Illinois State Board of Education
Department of Special Education

Funded in Part by Part B
Education of the Handicapped Act
(Public Law 94-142)

Springfield, Illinois
Summer 1986

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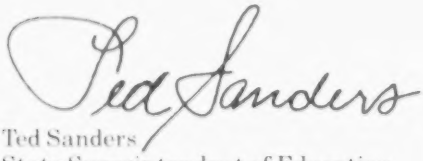
Foreword

This special transportation inservice publication was written at the encouragement of directors of special education and school transportation staff.

Appreciation is extended to Terry Bourret, Special Education Specialist, for the development of the document. It is intended to complement an earlier document, *Special Transportation Services: A Best Practices Guide*, which was printed in 1983 by the Department of Specialized Educational Services.

Special acknowledgement is given for the cooperation received from Illinois State Board of Education staff and local education agencies in the development of this project. Without their interest and assistance, this manual could not have been completed.



Ted Sanders
State Superintendent of Education

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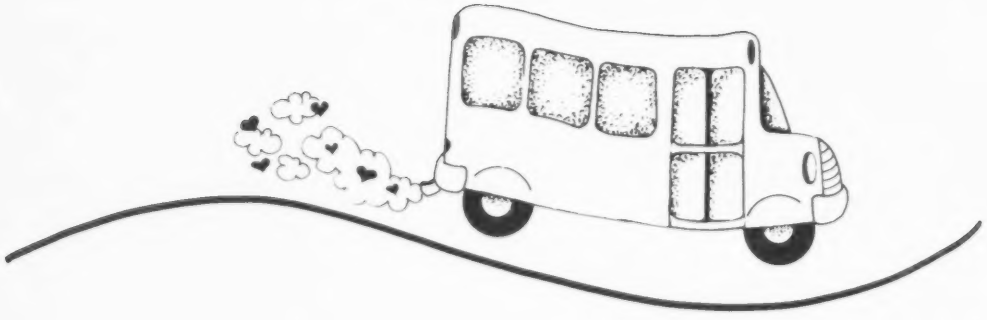
Purpose

Inservice training is a key to assuring that school personnel are well prepared to deliver services to handicapped children and youth. Therefore, this inservice manual is designed for use in training regular and special education transportation personnel who provide transportation services to handicapped students. Through this manual it is hoped that they will develop an awareness of handicapped children and youth and their special needs.



Types of Special Education Transportation

Depending on the circumstances and the severity of the handicap, handicapped students may be transported by special education transportation, regular transportation or parent-conducted transportation. Each of these types of transportation is described below.

Special education transportation includes:

- Travel in a vehicle which transports only special education students on a scheduled route such as to and from home and school,
- Travel to and from school and special programs including community-based instructional and/or training sites,
- The use of special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps.

Regular transportation is travel by a handicapped student in a vehicle which transports regular education students on a scheduled route.

Parent-conducted transportation is travel by a handicapped student in a vehicle driven by a properly licensed parent on a scheduled route at no cost to the parent. The travel expenses are totally reimbursed by the school district according to district travel policy.

State Regulations Governing Special Education Transportation

23 Illinois Administrative Code (Special Education Regulations filed by the State Board of Education)

Section 226.445 — Transportation and Other Services

When a state-operated or private day program is utilized, the local district shall provide transportation for the children in this program. Other services may be provided as mutually agreed between the district and the state-operated or private facility.

Section 226.910 — Eligibility for Transportation

Each child who exhibits one or more exceptional characteristics as described in Article 14 of *The School Code of Illinois* shall be eligible for special transportation. Such transportation shall be provided as the child's exceptionalities or the program location may require.

Section 226.920 — Vehicles Used

Vehicles utilized for special transportation shall be adapted to the specific needs of the children receiving this service.

Section 226.930 — Training of Personnel

Personnel responsible for special transportation shall be given inservice experiences which will enable them to understand and appropriately relate to exceptional children.

Section 226.935 — Provision for Transportation

The provisions for transportation services and vehicle adaption shall be included in the IEP (Individualized Education Program).

Section 226.938 — Change in Mode of Transportation

When there is a change in the student's transportation from special bus to another mode of transportation such as regular bus or walking to school, this change shall be included in the IEP.

Section 226.940 — Scheduling of Transportation

Special transportation shall be scheduled in such a way that a child's health and ability to relate to the educational experiences provided are not adversely affected. Every effort should be made to limit the child's total travel time to not more than one (1) hour each way to and from the special education facility.

Section 226.950 — Transportation and Instructional Schedule

The special education student's arrival and departure times shall insure a full instructional day as provided for in the IEP.

Section 226.960 — Transportation to a Residential School

When a student is placed in a residential facility in accordance with these regulations, the school district shall provide transportation services for the initial placement in the facility and for the return home at the close of the school term which is applicable to the student's placement. In the event the school district assumes responsibility for transportation arrangements, it shall provide reasonable notice to parents of departure dates and times. It shall, in all instances, submit notification to the parents within 48 hours of completing those arrangements. The mode(s) of travel and degree of support and supervision to be provided shall be included in the IEP. The school district shall also provide transportation services in accordance with the following criteria:

a) The school district shall provide transportation services for one round trip home, usually at a midterm break or at another time as mutually agreed by the school district and the parents, and at such additional times as the facility is to be temporarily closed.

b) The school district shall provide round-trip transportation services at any time that the school district seeks additional diagnostic assessments of the student, if a student who is over eighteen (18) seeks to be present during a multidisciplinary conference or a due process hearing, or if the parent wishes the student to be present during a due process hearing.

c) The school district shall provide round-trip transportation services for emergency reasons in cases of serious illness of the student or of death or imminent death of an individual in the student's immediate family. Immediate family shall be understood to mean a parent, a grandparent, a sibling, or any person who resides in the student's immediate household. If the school district questions the severity of an illness of the student or an immediate family member, it may require the opinion of a licensed physician to corroborate the severity of the illness.

d) The school district may also provide transportation services to encourage family contacts and/or to reintegrate the student in the home and the home community. The school district shall have the authority to determine, upon consultation with the parents, when transportation is appropriate for these reasons and shall incorporate this decision with the specific reasons in the student's IEP.

e) Reimbursement from the State Board of Education for transportation services in relationship to residential placements shall be authorized when the school district reports that one or more of these criteria have been met.

92 Illinois Administrative Code, Chapter 1, 2.160, Subchapter C (Department of Transportation)

Section 452.160 — Vehicles for Special Education Transportation and/or School-Related Activities

General Requirements

Vehicles used for transporting children declared eligible for Special Education services shall comply with the minimum standard of one (1) of the three (3) classifications of vehicles that are allowed, i.e., automobiles, station wagons, carryalls used in transporting nine or less passengers; van-type conversion buses, 1 through 16 passengers; and buses of 16 passengers or more.

Due to the nature of certain handicapping conditions, vehicles utilized for special education transportation shall be adapted to the specific needs of the children receiving this service. This may require certain modifications to the minimum standards.

Special Equipment for Children Who Are Physically or Orthopedically Handicapped

This Section lists standards for special equipment and exceptions that may be made in the minimum standards.

The interior design of these vehicles will not be a cause for rejection provided a joint approval, issued by the Department and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (renamed Illinois State Board of Education in 1979), is presented to the Certified Mechanic at the time of inspection.

Restraining Devices

Restraining devices or safety belts may be used if they are securely fastened to the seat or the floor of the vehicle.

Special Service Door

1. A special door opening may be located on the right side of the bus far enough to the rear to prevent the door, when open, from obstructing the front right service door. Door openings shall be adequate to accommodate wheel chairs.
2. Doors shall be equipped with a device that will actuate an audible or visible signal, located in the driver's compartment, when doors are not securely closed.
3. Each door shall contain a fixed or movable window aligned with the lower line of other windows of bus, and as nearly as practical of same size as other bus windows.
4. Each door panel shall open outward and a positive fastening device shall be installed to hold the door in open position.
5. Door panels shall be constructed to be equivalent in strength and materials to other school bus doors.
6. Door posts and headers shall be reinforced sufficiently to provide support and strength equivalent to the area of the side of the bus not used for service doors. Outriggers from the chassis shall be installed at the front and rear of door openings to support the floor with the same strength as other floor portions.

Bi-Parting Doors

1. Doors shall be made of two panels of approximately equal width, equipped with hinges, hinged to the side of bus, and each panel shall open outward. Forward panels shall be provided with overlapping flanges to close the space where door panels meet, and weather seals shall be provided to close all door edges.
2. Doors shall be equipped with at least a one-point fastening device on the rear panel to the floor or header and at least one two-point fastening device to the floor and header on the forward door panel, both manually operated.
3. Sliding doors are acceptable, provided they meet the manufacturer's specifications.

Ramps or Lifts

1. Floors of a ramp or lift shall be covered with nonskid material.
2. Dustproof and waterproof enclosed containers shall be provided.

Power Lifts

1. If a power lift is used, it shall be of sufficient capacity and dimension to lift the maximum imposed load; the lift at the top and bottom travel limits shall provide easy egress and ingress from the lift.
2. If electricity is used, the alternator or generator and battery must be of increased capacity.
3. Controls shall be operable from both the interior and the exterior of the vehicle.
4. A device shall be installed which will be used to prevent operation of the lift until doors are opened.
5. In travel position the lift must be in its uppermost position and securely fastened.
6. Vehicles of less than 54-passenger capacity constructed for transportation of handicapped children may have the fuel tank located behind the rear wheels, inside or outside the chassis frame, with the fill pipe located on the right side of the body.

Ramps

1. Ramps shall be of sufficient strength and rigidity to support the imposed load and shall be equipped with a protective flange on each longitudinal side to keep the wheelchair on the ramp.
2. Ramps shall be equipped with a handle, or handles, and be of sufficient weight to permit one person to put the ramp in place and return it to the storage place.
3. Ramps shall be connected to the bus at floor level in such a manner as to permit easy access of the wheelchair to the floor of the bus.
4. Ramp length shall be sufficient for easy ingress and egress.

Fastening Devices for Wheelchairs

Positive fastening devices shall be provided, attached to the floor or the walls and/or both that will securely hold wheelchairs in position in the bus.

Special Light

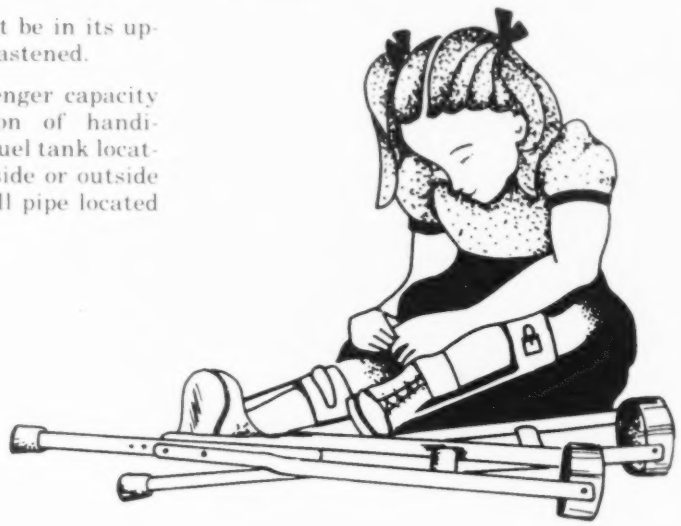
A light shall be placed inside the bus over the special service door and shall be operated from the door area.

Grab Handles

Grab handles shall be provided on each side of the front right service door only when this door is used for ingress or egress of children.

Over-Center Door Control

Over-center door control shall be provided only when this door is used for ingress and egress of children.



Major Concerns of Transportation Providers

In order to provide for the special needs of handicapped students, transportation providers must be aware of the special transportation needs and adaptations outlined in students' Individualized Education Programs. Two major concerns are to:

- Have the knowledge to handle severely, multiply handicapped and early childhood students properly; and
- Schedule transportation services to assure that handicapped students receive a full school day.

Areas of Exceptionality

To assist transportation personnel in understanding handicapped students, the following section includes definitions, characteristics, and suggestions for positive interaction.

Behavior Disordered

Behavior disordered students have adjustment problems and/or behaviors which may seriously interfere with their learning and/or social functioning. Behavior disordered students may be overly aggressive, withdrawn or depressed and may have short attention spans. They may be absent frequently, use inappropriate language (curse, use dirty language), explode verbally or physically at other persons, or refuse to talk. These students often cannot control how they act.

Suggestions for Positive Interaction

Be pleasant, but firm with behavior disordered students, change seating arrangements, provide rewards for good behavior, talk with students' teachers when necessary. Try to be consistent in managing these students.

Find out which students are known to have serious behavior problems. Talk to teachers and supervisors before transporting these students in order to find out the best management techniques.

These students require much patience and understanding. Remember, they often cannot help how they behave. This is part of their handicap.

Early Childhood

Early childhood is not a handicap; it is an educational program of services for pupils aged 3-5. Early childhood students may exhibit one or more of the following handicapping conditions: visual impairment, hearing impairment, deaf-blindness, speech and/or language impairment, physical impairment, behavior disorders, mental retardation or learning disability.

Suggestions for Positive Interaction

Early childhood students may be fearful or anxious about their first transportation experience; therefore, the driver should try to make the transportation experience of early childhood students as pleasant as possible. It is critical that the driver develop a good relationship with the students. In order to make the transportation experience a positive one for the students, it is important that the driver have the support of parents.

- Introduce yourself to the parents.
- Explain the transportation schedule to the parents.
- Answer any questions that the parents may have about transportation.

It is important that the driver have specific information about early childhood students from teachers, parents, and supervisors before transporting them.

Fasten early childhood students securely into their seats with the seatbelts provided.*

Above all else, the driver should enjoy children and should manage them patiently.

* Special attention must be given to the type of car seat or other fastening apparatus that will be used to secure the early childhood student. Public Act 83-1507 states that children from 0-3 must be securely strapped into a car seat before they are transported. The use of a car seat for students aged 4-5 is optional, but the students must be securely seat-belted even if a car seat is used.

Hearing Impaired

The hearing impaired population is usually referred to as either deaf or hard of hearing.

A deaf student is one who usually cannot hear clearly enough to understand spoken language even when using a hearing aid. Most deaf persons use their sight more than their hearing when communicating with others.

A hard-of-hearing student is one whose hearing makes it difficult to hear, but who can, with or without the use of a hearing aid, understand spoken language.

Hearing impaired students often have the following problems: a) great difficulty in understanding language, b) difficulty in knowing different sounds, c) speech which is often hard to understand, and d) a limited vocabulary.

Hearing impaired students generally need special help in communicating with others such as lip reading, hearing training, language development, and other communication skills. Most hard of hearing students and some deaf students wear hearing aids. Many deaf students use sign language to communicate with others.

Suggestions for Positive Interaction

Be sure hearing impaired students are close to you and are watching you when you talk to them.

Speak more slowly to hearing impaired students so they can read your lips.

Learn necessary sign language and fingerspelling for travel purposes to help in communicating with hearing impaired students.

Use different words if the student doesn't understand what you have said.

Find out how the hearing impaired child communicates.

Be patient. If you become frustrated in communicating with them try to imagine how frustrated the hearing impaired student must feel.

Learning Disabled

Students with specific learning disabilities may have learning problems in one or more of the following areas: understanding or using language, listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, or the ability to do math. Learning disabled students usually have normal intelligence, but experience specific learning problems in school.

Learning disabled students often have difficulty in following directions and may confuse letters and sounds. They are more likely to get lost. They often have trouble paying attention to others, may act improperly, and often have a poor attitude about themselves.

Suggestions for Positive Interaction

Learning disabled students should be handled in an understanding, consistent, but firm manner.

Be patient with learning disabled students and compliment or praise them for good behavior.

Talk with the teacher to find ways to communicate with learning disabled students if one way doesn't seem to work.

Mentally Handicapped

The mentally handicapped student's ability to relate to others, academic achievement, and ability to change behavior are slow. Such mental impairment may be mild, moderate, severe, or profound.

Mentally handicapped students may have difficulties in understanding what is said to them. For example, they may not be able to follow directions or express themselves clearly. They may be overly sociable or may withdraw and may not want to talk with anyone. Some of these students wet or soil their clothes.

Suggestions for Positive Interaction

Mentally handicapped students should be praised for good behavior. They should be complimented on good grooming and good manners.

Appropriate social behavior should be reinforced. Inappropriate behaviors should be ignored as long as the behaviors do not cause a danger to other students or in the safe operation of the vehicle. Drivers or aides should not become angry when students soil or wet their clothes, but instead, discuss with their teachers the appropriate action to take.

Since these students are often low functioning in their thinking and behavior, they should be treated patiently and calmly.

Physically Handicapped

Physically handicapped students have physical problems that require the use of modified or adapted physical settings, curriculum presentations, and/or other specialized materials or equipment to permit maximum social, emotional, and educational development.

Physically handicapped students may have problems with their muscles, bones, or nerves and may be medically fragile. Some physically handicapped students may have heart and breathing problems which may require special attention or a protective environment.

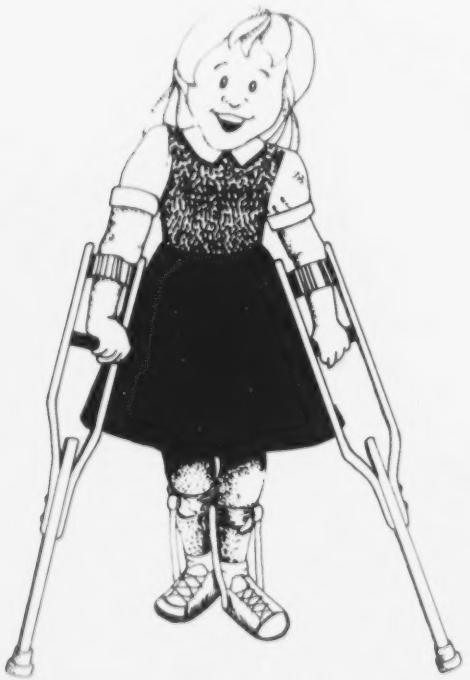
Physically handicapped students often need to use specially designed vehicles or devices to help in transporting them safely. Transportation personnel must pay careful attention to the safe operation of this equipment.

Suggestions for Positive Interaction

Be patient when communicating with physically handicapped students.

Talk with therapists, parents, and teachers in order to understand student needs and to decide on the best ways to help each physically handicapped student.

Compliment students on improved self-help skills and let these students do things for themselves as much as is reasonable.



Visually Impaired

The visually impaired population is often referred to as those who are blind and those who are partially sighted.

Blind students are those who may have a total loss of vision, have minimal light perception, or may have some usable vision with the use of special high power magnifiers or other low vision aids held at close range. These students ordinarily do not use vision as a primary way to learn. They depend heavily on their hearing.

Partially sighted students are those who have problems with their eyes which result in a loss of some vision, but still use vision with or without glasses or magnifiers as the main channel of learning.

Visually impaired students have problems in the structure of the eyes or how well they work. They often rub their eyes or may blink, squint or frown more frequently than normal. Visually impaired students may hold reading material unusually close or unusually far from the eyes.

Visually impaired students may complain of pain in the eyes, headaches, dizziness and/or nausea after close eye work. They may need to use special printed materials (braille or large print books) in order to read and may require an orientation and mobility specialist to teach them how to walk from place to place.

Suggestions for Positive Interaction

Allow visually impaired students as much independence as they can handle safely.

Know how much training the student has had in orientation and mobility skills. Do not assume that the student knows how to get on or off the vehicle.

Talk with the visually impaired student like you would with any student.

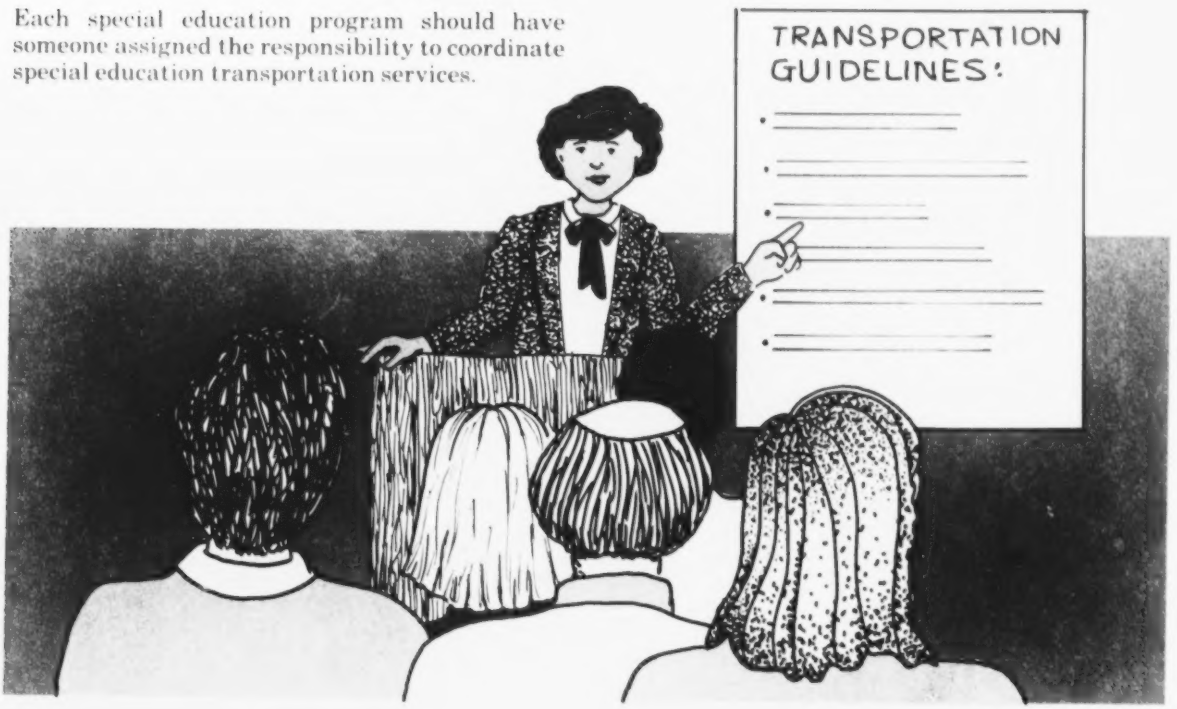
Discuss the appropriate ways of helping the visually impaired student with the student's teachers and parents.

Learn how well each visually impaired student can use his/her vision to travel safely.

Because of the inability of these students to see well, they should not be rushed but instead need to be treated patiently.

Responsibilities of Special Education Transportation Personnel

Each special education program should have someone assigned the responsibility to coordinate special education transportation services.



Transportation Coordinator

The transportation coordinator should:

1. Arrange student transportation services with local administrators.
2. Provide inservice training for drivers and transportation aides regarding their responsibilities in serving handicapped students.
3. Prepare routing plans and time schedules for drivers with local superintendents and directors of special education.
4. Follow up on transportation complaints.
5. Supervise and evaluate drivers and aides.
6. Know appropriate positioning and fastening techniques for handicapped students.
7. Assist in arranging for the purchase of appropriate adapted vehicles or arrange for the purchase and installation of special equipment.
8. Prepare a budget to meet the needs of the special education transportation program.
9. Be knowledgeable about local and state regulations and policies regarding transportation of the handicapped.
10. Develop transportation procedures for emergencies or suspensions.
11. Be responsible for the accurate reporting of data for the special education transportation reimbursement claim forms for the Illinois State Board of Education.
12. Be a contact person between the school programs and drivers/aides for communicating information specific to handicapped students.
13. Arrange at least one simulated emergency with each driver annually.

Driver

The driver of students with handicaps should:

1. Review bus routes with the transportation coordinator for the best routing of handicapped students.
2. Give attention to special travel arrangements for any student who may need them.
3. Make sure that the students are secure and comfortable after they are loaded.
4. Help the transportation aide, if one is assigned, with the positioning and securing of severely handicapped students.
5. Be aware of the students' special needs.
6. Keep a log or record of behavior or health problems and share concerns with the transportation coordinator, teachers and parents.
7. Learn about specially made equipment for the handicapped.
8. Learn about all transportation policies and regulations.
9. Be prepared to administer first aid.

Transportation Aide

Aides who assist drivers of students with handicaps should:

1. Find out exactly what their instructions are from the transportation coordinator and driver.
2. Assist the driver and the transportation coordinator in the preparation of transportation plans.
3. Learn about all transportation policies.
4. Cooperate with the driver for the overall welfare of the students.
5. Be a good model for the students and act interested in them.
6. Help the driver in maintaining discipline. Inappropriate or bad behavior should be recorded and reported to the appropriate administrator or school official.
7. Help students with activities that they cannot do for themselves, such as adjusting or fastening seat belts, fixing clothing, adjusting a prosthesis, assisting with personal hygiene or mobility.
8. Give first aid, when appropriate, as directed by the driver or communicated by a two-way radio from school officials or medical personnel.
9. Help students on and off school vehicles when appropriate. Students should be encouraged and motivated to do things by themselves such as walking, moving their wheelchairs or climbing steps.
10. Sit as far away from the driver as possible. This may help to prevent both adults from being injured in the event of an accident and allows for better supervision of the students.
11. Be as pleasant and helpful as possible.

Special Medical Considerations and Procedures for the Transportation of Handicapped Students

Special Medical Concerns

1. Keep emergency medical cards on students with medical or health-related needs.
2. Put transported medicine in a locked container on the vehicle.
3. Learn about first aid.

Procedures for the Management of Students Experiencing Epileptic Seizures

A seizure is an outward sign that something in a child's brain is not working the way it should. The seizure may last a few seconds or a few minutes. It might be a convulsion, a brief stare, an unusual movement of the body, or a change in awareness.

1. Find out which students have seizures, how they should be helped, and who should be contacted when a seizure occurs. Parents may be your best information source.
2. A seizure is painless to the student. Remain calm.

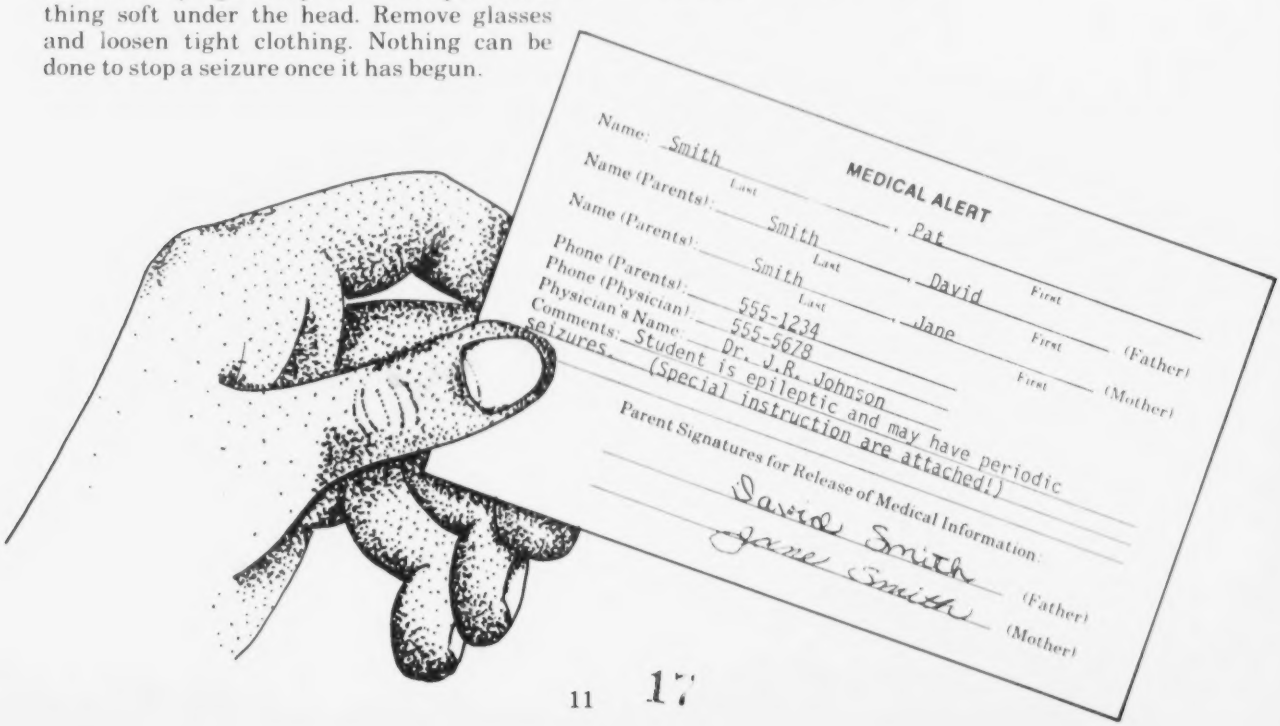
During the seizure:

Do not try to hold the student. Help the student into a lying down position and put something soft under the head. Remove glasses and loosen tight clothing. Nothing can be done to stop a seizure once it has begun.

4. Clear the area of hard or sharp objects. Try not to stop the student's movements in any way.
5. Do not block the breathing passage. If the mouth is open, a soft object such as a folded handkerchief may be placed between the side teeth of the student to keep the student from biting his/her tongue.

After the seizure:

6. Turn the student to one side to allow saliva to drain from the mouth. Let the student rest.
7. A student may be confused or disoriented after waking up from a seizure and should not be left alone until fully alert.
8. The transportation coordinator should call the student's parents about the seizure as soon as possible, or perhaps the student's doctor if such notification has the parents' approval.
9. If certain students have epilepsy and have seizures even with medication, you should get to know them well enough so that they can tell you of an impending attack. Some persons with epilepsy know when a seizure is about to happen.


MEDICAL ALERT
Name: Smith (Last) Pat (First)
Name (Parents): Smith (Last) David (First) (Father)
Name (Parents): Smith (Last) Jane (First) (Mother)
Phone (Parents): 555-1234
Phone (Physician): 555-5678
Physician's Name: Dr. J.R. Johnson
Comments: Student is epileptic and may have periodic seizures. (Special instruction are attached!)
Parent Signatures for Release of Medical Information:
David Smith (Father)
Jane Smith (Mother)

Emergency Suggestions and Procedures for the Transportation of Handicapped Children

Emergency Suggestions

1. Keep an up-to-date seating chart with special notes for substitute drivers.
2. Keep a card file with student telephone numbers, addresses, teacher names, and other important information. Tape telephone money to a 3x5 card with emergency telephone numbers.
3. **Pre-plan** locations for emergency stops.
4. Keep a clearly marked map on your vehicle with the locations of the fastest routes to hospitals, fire stations, telephones, and other locations for emergency aid.

5. Check emergency gear, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and oxygen tanks regularly.
6. Try to stay calm if an accident should occur. If you upset or scare the students, their behavior may become unpredictable and may cause further complications.
7. Do not leave your riders. Stay with them until help arrives.
8. If possible, train other riders to assist the more handicapped students in an emergency. Teach them the use of emergency equipment.
9. Rehearse emergency communications with transportation headquarters staff.

Emergency Procedures Following an Accident

1. Turn off ignition switch and take keys.
2. Set brakes.
3. Remain calm and comfort the students.
4. Check the more severely handicapped students to see that they are positioned safely and comfortably.
5. Use warning devices to "protect the scene."
   a. Place reflectors and flares according to state law.
   b. Protect the scene from traffic and people so that evidence is not destroyed.
   c. The vehicle involved should not be moved until law officers advise you to do so.
6. Call the police and transportation headquarters on the two-way radio to tell them about the accident and to get special instructions from them.
7. Have emergency medical card information ready for medical personnel if paramedics and an ambulance are needed.

Evacuation Suggestions

1. Follow evacuation procedures included in the general driver's training manual.
2. Select one or two of your more capable students to help in evacuation drills. Teach them to help in disconnecting tie-downs or seat buckles for other students.
3. Consider transporting a spare collapsible wheelchair for help in moving the more severely handicapped student who cannot walk well.
4. Stay as calm as possible in emergency situations since some handicapped students may become panicky and uncontrollable if they sense fear and anxiety. Deaf students are very aware of fearful facial expressions and body language.
5. Give short, simple directions when evacuating during an emergency.

Suggested Procedures for Drivers When Parents or Guardians Are Not at Home

Because of the special problems of students with handicapping conditions, drivers should know which students should not be left unsupervised. You are responsible for their safety and welfare until these students are delivered to the care of their parents or guardians.

The problem of parents not being home should be discussed in advance with the transportation coordinator. The following procedures are suggested if parents or guardians are not at home when students arrive.

1. When a student is ready to be dropped off at home and no one is there, contact the transportation coordinator for specific instructions on what to do.
2. If you are unable to reach the transportation coordinator, keep the student on the bus, complete the route, and return later to the student's home.
3. Leave the student with a relative or a neighbor only if the parents/guardians have previously asked you to do so. The parent request must *be in writing in such instances.* This request should be kept in the student's file.
4. Take the student to the nearest school and ask for help in locating the parents.
5. As a last resort, contact law enforcement officials for assistance.

Positioning and Management of Severely Handicapped Students

Proper positioning in vehicle seats or wheelchairs is important for the well-being of those persons whose ability to move or health condition is severely limited. If not positioned properly, they will not receive the full benefit of safety equipment. For many severely physically disabled children and youth, regular wheelchair or regular vehicle seating does not provide appropriate support for functional sitting positions. This means that when students with severe physical impairments are not positioned properly 1) they may be in pain, 2) their muscles may weaken, 3) they may develop severe postural defects or 4) their physical problems can become worse. Also, these children and youth may have severe lung infections, breathing difficulties, and problems in moving their bodies.

Benefits of Proper Positioning

Individualized body support, fastening and adaptations provide body support that is necessary for a near-normal sitting posture. Students properly positioned can usually see around themselves more easily and can participate in their environment more fully. Head control or posture is usually improved greatly by proper positioning in a wheelchair or seat. Better head control is extremely important because persons whose heads are continually in sideways, straight up or straight down positions do not have normal opportunities for stimulation, social interaction, and discovery.

Wheelchair Adaptations

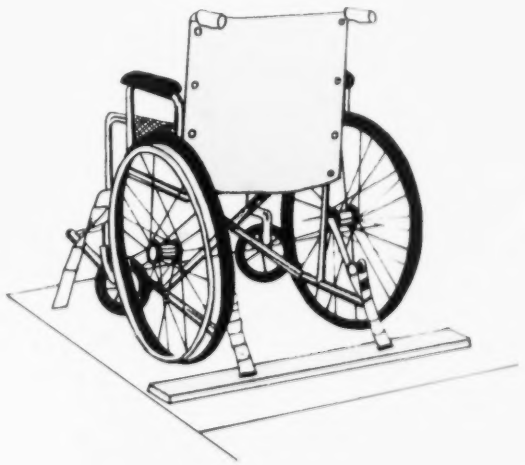
Individualized wheelchair adaptations usually improve comfort and posture for students, providing stability and often freeing up their hands that can be used for supporting themselves. Well-positioned persons have fewer physical distractions requiring their attention enabling them to talk and learn more easily.

NOTE: ***It is critical, especially for severely involved physically handicapped students, to have upper torso support. Otherwise, in collisions, a student may have excessive upper torso movement which could cause stress on the spinal column. Such stress could result in additional damage to an already severely handicapped student.***

Adapted wheelchairs encourage controlled, active movements which can improve coordination and motor development and lessen muscle weakening, maintain or improve scoliosis (curvature of the spine) and other postural defects, strengthen lungs, decrease respiratory infection, reduce or eliminate pressure sores, and lessen involuntary movement.

Wheelchair or Carseat Fastening/Tie-Downs

1. The tieing down or fastening of wheelchairs separately from student fastening is important for crash protection.
2. The use of a lap belt to the floor as a tie-down for the wheelchair and student is dangerous and should not be done. The student should be belted only to the wheelchair.
3. Aeroquip straps provide satisfactory wheelchair fastening for forward facing chairs during accidents if fastening is at the joints of the chair tubing.
4. Velcro fasteners are inadequate for student fastening, but may be desirable for postural support belts placed over soft parts of the body.
5. The four-point belt systems offer the most security for wheelchair fastening. The use of a wheelchair seat belt with these systems improves lower torso support.



Sample Letter to the Parent or Guardian

Dear _____:

Special education transportation is an important service which can help to assure that your child receives an appropriate school program in accord with his or her Individualized Education Program.

Special education transportation staff, besides getting your child to and from school, prepare your child to develop an awareness of safety, responsibility, independence and an appreciation for the rights of others. You and your child are important members of the transportation safety team.

- *You* can help *your* child learn simple safety rules.
- *You* can teach *your* child to follow directions and obey others.
- *You* can set a good example for *your* child by being a safe and obedient driver.
- *You* can strengthen *your* child's special education transportation program by taking an active interest in it.

Sincerely yours,

Director of Special Education

Transportation Supervisor

Sample Policy Statement for Safety and Discipline Procedures Regarding Student Transportation

Authority

The final decision on matters relating to pupil transportation shall reside with the State Board of Education.

Lines of Communication

- Within the local transportation system, the lines of communication shall be from aide to driver to transportation supervisor to director of special education to superintendent to the school board.
- The transportation supervisor is responsible for monitoring and giving input regarding the solution of all problems that occur beyond the level of school principal/driver.
- The parent or guardian of the student shall be involved in the discipline procedures of the district whenever it is appropriate.

Inservice Training

- An inservice program on transportation for the handicapped shall be held annually.
- Inservice topics can include characteristics of the handicapped, emergency first aid procedures, behavior management strategies, evacuation procedures, communication techniques, legal issues regarding the handicapped, adaptive techniques, positioning of the handicapped, fastening, assistive devices for the handicapped, IEPs, responsibilities of transportation personnel, etc.

Method of Operation: Student's Behavior Does Not Pose a Continuing Danger to Persons or Property

1. The driver shall speak to the student directly about the problem.
2. The driver shall refer behavior problems to the teacher, principal or transportation supervisor.
3. If the above two steps have not resulted in the correction of the problem, then the driver shall complete a disciplinary report and file it with the transportation supervisor, who in turn will contact the school principal about the contents of the report.
4. If the student continues to behave in an improper manner, then temporary suspension from bus service or other appropriate measures will be considered by school officials. A multidisciplinary conference shall be convened to review the student's case study and recommend special behavior management strategies, interim educational programming or alternative transportation.

Method of Operation: Student's Behavior Is a Danger to Persons or Property

1. The driver should inform the transportation supervisor, giving specifics regarding the student's misconduct and outlining why the student's actions make continued presence on the vehicle a continuing danger or a threat to the safe operation of the vehicle.
2. The transportation supervisor may choose one or a combination of the following actions:
   - Make arrangements to transport the student by a substitute vehicle;
   - Contact the principal or superintendent to request permission to immediately remove the student from transportation service;
   - Ask that an emergency multidisciplinary conference be conducted to review the case and to make alternative arrangements for the student.
3. With permission of the proper school officials, transportation service may be immediately suspended. The route supervisor may arrange to have the student transported to school the following school day alone on a separate bus, van, or car. The transportation supervisor must contact the student's home prior to the regular pick-up time to inform the parents/guardian of the late pick-up time and the reason for a change in pick-up time if one is necessary.
4. In any of the above cases, the driver who experienced the dangerous behavior shall file a written report with school officials on the school day following the incident.
5. If suspension of the student from transportation service occurs, then immediately upon initiation of the suspension, the student and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student shall receive written notice of the following by the suspending official:
   - The reason(s) for the suspension, including a copy of the specific rules allegedly violated by the student;
   - The beginning date and total number of days of suspension; and
   - The right to a hearing if in disagreement regarding reasons for the suspension.

Recommended Disciplinary Procedures for the Hard-to-Control Student

1. Pull to a safe stop, pocket your keys, attempt to calm the student and if necessary
   - Rearrange seating,
   - Restrain the student,
   - Contact the transportation coordinator regarding the problem and follow his/her orders, or
   - Pull up to the emergency entrance of a hospital, a police station, or a fire station and ask for help.
2. Don't leave the transportation vehicle.

Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

1. If the driver becomes physically incapacitated, an emergency packet which can be used by firemen, policemen, or other concerned persons shall exist in each transportation vehicle in a readily visible location.
2. Each student shall participate in a minimum of two annual emergency evacuation drills.

Rules of Conduct

1. Students should behave in a manner that assures the safe operation of school transportation vehicles, e.g., buses, vans or cars.
2. Students are expected to be polite and to obey drivers, aides or anyone else who helps with transportation.
3. Students should always do the following:
   - Keep their seat belts buckled if the vehicle is so equipped.
   - Talk quietly.
   - Stay in their seats until the driver or aide say it is time to get up.
   - Enter and exit the bus without pushing, fighting or yelling.
   - Help other students if necessary.
   - Be on time for transportation vehicles.
4. Students shall *not:*
   - Fight.
   - Vandalize.
   - Throw objects out of windows.
   - Use matches.
   - Use or possess illegal or unprescribed drugs.
   - Use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol.
   - Smoke in the vehicle.
   - Open emergency doors without permission of the driver.
   - Talk back to the driver or aide.
   - Eat or drink on the vehicle unless the driver or aide says it is okay.
   - Swear or curse.
   - Interfere with other students' safe transportation such as unfastening seat belts.

Purpose of the Daily Transportation Checklist

The daily transportation checklist is a communication tool to collect data on transportation behavior problems, to monitor safety related behavior and to justify remediation of behavior problems.

Directions for Use

- Each child must be judged *individually* based upon limitations of their handicaps.
- Adapt your expectations to the ability of the child. If you are not confident that you know what is to be expected, ask the special teacher.
- Each handicapped student's behavior is to be rated in the morning (A.M.) and evening (P.M.). Use a plus (+) to indicate good/adequate/appropriate specific behavior. Use a zero (0) to indicate unacceptable/inadequate/dangerous behavior. If you note no problem behavior, give the child a plus.
- If you feel further description is necessary to explain a particular child's behavior, make comments below or on the back of the daily transportation checklist.
- Return this sheet to the special teacher the morning after each trip.
- Continue using this form to record behaviors for specified children until there is agreement with the driver and the special teacher that the form is no longer needed or that special plans need to be made for a specific student.

Daily Transportation Checklist

Date Bus # Driver School Teacher

Use a plus (+) to indicate acceptable/appropriate behaviors and a zero (0) to indicate unacceptable/problem behaviors.

Name	In Seat		Respecting Others		Following Directions		Appropriate Verbal Behavior		No Physical Aggression	
	A.M. #1	P.M. #2	A.M. #1	P.M. #2	A.M. #1	P.M. #2	A.M. #1	P.M. #2	A.M. #1	P.M. #2
1.										
2.										
3.										
4.										
5.										
6.										
7.										
8.										
9.										
10.										

Comments (good behaviors/noticeable improvement):

Sample Disciplinary Letter to Parents

Date_____ 19____

Date of Violation_____ 19____

Dear_____:

The purpose of this report is to inform you of a disciplinary incident involving the student on the school bus, *which may have jeopardized the safety and well-being of all students.* The disciplinary action taken is based upon the seriousness of the offense and/or the number of offenses committed.

You are urged to both review the action taken by the driver and to cooperate with the corrective action initiated today by the School District.

_____ has been cited for a violation of the rules listed below:

Violation:

____ Improper Boarding/Departing Procedures
____ Bringing Articles Aboard Bus of Injurious or Objectionable Nature
____ Failure to Remain Seated
____ Refusing to Obey Driver
____ Fighting/Pushing/Tripping
____ Tampering with Bus Equipment
____ Destruction of Property
____ Swearing
____ Hanging Out of Window
____ Throwing Objects in or out of Bus
____ Lighting Matches/Smoking on Bus
____ Spitting/Littering
____ Rude, Discourteous and Annoying Conduct
____ Other Behavior Relating to Safety, Well-Being and Respect for Others

Details:_____

_____

Driver:_____ **Vehicle #**_____

Offenses 1st 2nd 3rd

Disciplinary action taken:_____

_____

The privilege of riding the bus may be suspended. You are urged to review the disciplinary action taken and discuss this situation with your child to prevent further occurrence.

If you would like some additional information regarding this problem, please do not hesitate to call me at _____.

Transportation Supervisor_____ (Name)_____

Director of Special Education_____ (Name)_____

Principal_____ (Name)_____

Building_____ (Name)_____

Communication Suggestions with Special Education Students

Some students with special handicaps have difficulty in communicating; therefore, drivers and aides are encouraged to review the following suggestions to make communication a positive experience with your students.

1. Use the student's name.
2. Look at the students while addressing them whenever it is possible.
3. Use short, simple, precise commands at a slower speaking rate.
4. Ask questions which require short answers only.
5. Use a positive approach with the students rather than a negative one.
6. Learn the manual alphabet and basic signs for the deaf when transporting hearing impaired students.
7. Tell the students what you want them to do, and not just to stop what they are doing.

Expressions, Phrases, and Sentences to Use with Low-Language-Functioning Students

- Good morning.
- Good night.
- See you tomorrow!
- Hi! or Hello!
- What's your name?
- My name is _____.
- What is your address?
- Who is your teacher?
- Please (sit down), (come here), (stop that).
- Put on your seatbelt.
- Don't bother the window!
- No (fighting)! (playing)!
- Walk carefully!
- Don't run!
- Please help _____!
- Good-bye.
- Whose _____ is that?
- Where does _____ live?
- What happened?
- How old are you?

Student Training and Responsibility

1. Early in the school year the student should be given orientation by the driver and special education staff about:
   - The operation of restraining devices,
   - Emergency exit plans,
   - General vehicle safety practices,
   - Methods of assisting each other in emergencies, and
   - Appropriate behavior while riding in a moving vehicle.
2. School and transportation personnel should work together a minimum of twice yearly on evacuation training with their students.
3. Basic rules for riding transportation vehicles should be printed, reviewed, and sent to the student and to the student's family.

Resources

The following list of resources is provided for your convenience. This list is not inclusive, and no endorsement by the Illinois State Board of Education is implied.

Consultants

Dan Anderson
Assistant Director of Special Education
JAMP
Post Office Box 127
Olmsted, Illinois 62970
Phone: 618/742-6231

J. Earnest Cooney
Dean Medical Center
Director of Development
1313 Fish Hatchery Road
Madison, Wisconsin 53715
Phone: 608/252-8271

Rollie Gagnon
Fox Developmental Center
Dwight, Illinois 60420
Phone: 815/584-3347
(Positioning & Fastening)

Lincoln Land Epilepsy Association
1415 East Jefferson
Springfield, Illinois 62703
Phone: 217/789-2258

Larry Schneider, Ph.D.
Associate Research Scientist
The University of Michigan
Highway Safety Research Institute
Huron Parkway and Baxter Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109
Phone: 313/763-3582

Dayton Ray Turner, Ed D.
2720 Penacho Circle
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80917
Phone: 303/574-3749

Brenda Yarnell
United Cerebral Palsy
Land of Lincoln
206 South 6th Street
Springfield, Illinois
Phone: 217/525-6522
(Positioning & Fastening)

Suppliers

Aeroquip Corporation
Industrial Division
300 South East Avenue
Jackson, Michigan 49203
(and)
2091 Finley Road
Suite 106
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515
Phone: 312/626-5660
(Aeroquip is a producer of lifts & wheelchair retainers)

Brun Corporation
1014 South Monticello
P.O. Box 310
Winamac, Indiana 46996
(Supplier of wheelchair lifts)

Carpenter Body Works, Inc.
Mitchell, Indiana 47446
Phone: 812/849-3131
(Supplier of lifts, belts, tie-downs, etc.)

Collins Industries, Incorporated
P.O. Box #58
Hutchinson, Kansas 67501
Phone: 316/663-4441

Crow River Industries, Inc.
Skyway Plaza Office Building, Suite 1
1415 East Wazzata Blvd.
Wazzata, Minnesota 55391
Phone: 1-800-328-3632 or 1-414-786-8131
(Manufactures wheelchair lifts for vans and buses and securement systems)

Hausman (Sales Rep. for Collins)
2323 South Archer Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60616
Phone: 312/842-0800
(Supplier of lifts, belts, tie-downs, etc.)

R.J. Mobility Systems and
Conversion Specialists
715 South 5th Avenue
Maywood, Illinois 60153
(Supplier and installer of equipment for special education transportation vehicles)

References

Bluth, Dr. Linda Fran. *Transporting Handicapped Students: A Resource Manual and Recommended Guidelines for School Transportation and Special Education Personnel.* Washington, D.C.: National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc., 1985.

Dickman, Irving R. *Handbook on Transportation for UCP Affiliates.* Land of Lincoln United Cerebral Palsy, 206 South 6th, Springfield, Illinois, 62701.

Illinois School Bus Drivers Instructional Program Trainee Guide. Springfield, Illinois: Illinois State Board of Education, 1980.

Policy Statement Safety and Discipline, Procedures Student Transportation. Burbank, Illinois: AERO Special Education District, 1977.

Glossary

Adaptation. Special changes to improve the physical setting for handicapped students.

Assistive Devices. Special devices which assist the student in his/her environment including hearing aids, crutches, canes, walkers, braces, and wheelchairs. Handicapped students who use assistive devices require careful individual consideration when being transported. Adaptive procedures for assistive devices should be clearly written in students' IEPs. An example of this would be the use of a safety belt or vest to hold a child securely in a good posturing position in a wheelchair as required by a doctor's prescription.

Aura. A sensation, including sounds, images of light, odors, etc., that comes before an epileptic seizure.

Behavior Management. Special procedures used in controlling the behavior of students. Such procedures may include behavior checklists, restraint techniques or behavior modification.

Car Seat. A specially designed seat for an infant or handicapped person.

Communication. Getting ideas or needs across to others by talking, writing, signing, drawing, pointing or through body language.

Egress. A going out; way out; exit.

Epilepsy. A regular problem of the central nervous system characterized by convulsions and seizures.

Fingerspelling. Communicating by use of the manual alphabet (words spelled out on the fingers).

Individualized Education Program (IEP). A written education plan of instruction that includes the child's present level of functioning, specific areas needing special services, annual goals, short-term objectives, and method of evaluation. The IEP is a requirement under P.L. 94-142 for all handicapped students declared eligible for services. Special education transportation should be specifically delineated in the IEP.

Ingress. A going in; entrance.

Manual Communication. Communicating by means of gestures, formal signs, facial expressions, fingerspelling and body language.

Multidisciplinary Conference. A meeting among appropriate persons for the purpose of determining eligibility for special education, developing recommendations for special education programming, reviewing educational progress, or considering changes in the current special education program.

Positioning. Posturing body parts in preferred alignment for the best functioning.

Power Lift. An electrically or battery operated device which is attached to a vehicle for use in transporting handicapped individuals. A power lift is sometimes used to lift those handicapped individuals who are non-ambulatory or who use a wheelchair.

Ramp. A special device or piece of equipment used to connect a transportation vehicle with the ground surface.

Restraint. A device, apparatus or procedure used to keep an individual under control or within a certain area for his/her own safety or that of others.

Seizure. A loss of awareness/attention that may or may not be accompanied by staring, eye fluttering, muscle weakness, irritability.

> **grand mal.** often characterized by sudden movements and a loss of consciousness.
>
> **petit mal.** momentary loss of consciousness with only minor muscle jerks, seen especially in children.
>
> **Jacksonian.** a form of epilepsy which may be limited to one side of the body, marked by periods of progressively more intense muscle spasms alternating with periods of relaxation. Consciousness, as a rule, is retained during the seizure.

Simulation. Pretend or mock activity which is to be as much like a real situation as possible.

Special Transportation. Those transportation services which are required because of the student's exceptional characteristics or the location of the special education program, or related services, and which are in addition to the regular transportation services provided by the local school district.

Specialized Equipment. Special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps.

Torso. The trunk or part of the body supporting the head, arms, and legs.

Illinois
State Board of Education

100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777

Walter W. Naumer, Jr., Chairman
Illinois State Board of Education

Ted Sanders
State Superintendent of Education

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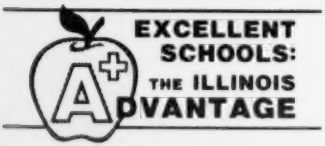

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